

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (R-FL) today led a group of 14 Representatives in writing a letter to the President urging him to consider the national security consequences of blocking the Keystone XL Pipeline.

“We can buy oil from an ally like Canada, or we can buy it from countries that wish us harm,” Rooney said. “Blocking the Keystone Pipeline poses dire national security concerns because it not only makes us more dependent on countries like Venezuela, but also may give China an energy advantage by allowing them to tap this vital resource.”

In the letter, the Representatives wrote: “In addition to the economic growth and thousands of new jobs this project would provide, there are dire national security consequences to foregoing this energy source from our ally and allowing another country, like China, to utilize the resources instead.

“The less we buy from Canada, the more we buy from countries that do not have our best interests at heart and wish to do us harm . . . By delaying approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline Project, we are not only giving China an unnecessary energy advantage, we are further hurting in the global economy and reducing our own security . . . We respectfully request that you put our nation’s economic and security needs first and move forward with approving the pipeline.”

Representatives Mo Brooks (AL-05), Mike Coffman (CO-06), Michael Conaway (TX-11), Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-19), Randy Forbes (VA-04), Tim Griffin (AR-02), Vicky Hartzler (MO-04), Duncan Hunter (CA-52), Randy Neugebauer (TX-19), David Rivera (FL-25), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18), Robert Schilling (IL-17), and Allen West (FL-22) joined Congressman Rooney in signing the letter.

Complete text below:

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to express our sincere opposition to your decision to delay the approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline plan until after the 2012 elections, and we respectfully ask that you put politics aside and the interests of our nation first by approving this project. In addition to the economic growth and thousands of new jobs this project would provide, there are dire national security consequences to foregoing this energy source from our ally and allowing another country, like China, to utilize the resources instead.

We are in a global energy race; the United States competes with growing economies such as China for available energy resources around the world. As long as your Administration pursues an energy policy that prohibits us from developing American resources, like oil and natural gas off the Outer Continental Shelf and the Rocky Mountains, we will remain dependent on importing energy. Our dependence on foreign oil is a major security threat to our country. While we continue to debate and try to improve our own energy policies, we must do more to secure ourselves in the global market. Currently, the United States imports over nine million barrels of oil a day, with Canada being our greatest supplier. The less we buy from Canada, the more we buy from countries that do not have our best interests at heart and wish to do us harm. We are not Canada's only energy customer, and if we do not buy their products someone else will. In this case, we are now hearing it will be China.

Increasing our dependence on countries such as Venezuela for oil poses a major security threat to our nation. It's not just the cars we drive and planes we fly in that rely on oil. The fact is our tanks, armored vehicles, jets and other military equipment use oil. In order to maintain the strongest, most advanced and prepared military in the world, we need a dependable source of energy. This reality and need for security is what should guide the approval of the pipeline. Why further enable our enemies with not only our money but our dependence on their energy sources?

We have long been proponents of the United States becoming energy self-sufficient, but until that time, we must import from our allies as much as possible to remain competitive in the energy race and safer in our reliance on foreign suppliers. By delaying approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline Project, we are not only giving China an unnecessary energy advantage, we are further hurting in the global economy and reducing our own security.

As President, you have a responsibility to rise above the controversy surrounding this project, and an obligation to resist the temptation there may be to delay the decision for political reasons. These are difficult times for our nation, and times like this call for strong leadership. Therefore, we respectfully request that you put our nation's economic and security needs first and move forward with approving the pipeline.

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